Sam. O'Bryan

THE

INFORMATION

OF

Stephen Dugdale;

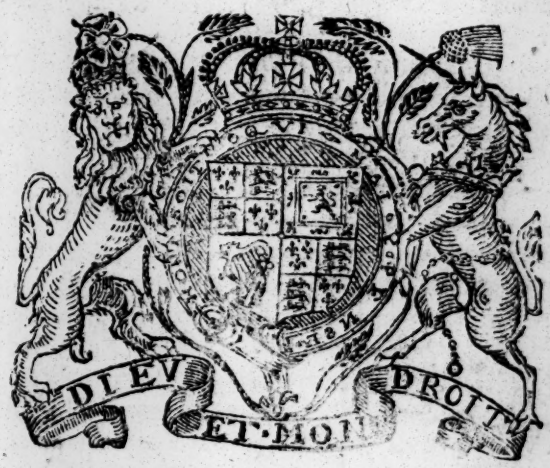
GENT.

Delivered at the BAR of the

Houſe of Commons,

Munday the firſt day of *November*, in the year of our Lord 1680.

Peruſed and Signed to be Printed, according to the Order of the Houſe of Commons, By me WILLIAM WILLIAMS *Speaker.*



Reprinted at Dublin, 1680.

Vet. A3 d. 272

P 30-1/399

The *Information* given at the Barr of the *Honour*able the *House* of Commons, By Mr *Stephen Dugdale*, On the 30th of *October*, *Anno Dom.* 1680. *viz.*

THAT about two or three and twenty years since, *I* was brought over from the Church of *England* to the Church of *Rome*, by one Mr. *Knight* a Priest, continuing some years under his care, till at length he the said Mr. *Knight*, through infirmity of body, not being able to Officiate his Priestly Function, he delivered me to the care of one *Francis Evers* a Jesuit, who did not only take care to instruct me in matters relating to a future State, as to a future State, but in all things as far as he could in temporal things. Likewise he the said *Mr. Evers* laid an injunction upon me to visit him every day once, if *I* was at home: and so by such means we grew to such an intimacy, that scarcely any thing that the one knew, but the other was privy to it. So that sometimes as we were talking of affairs of State, and the Revolutions of Governments, we came to discourse of our own. And he the said *Evers* often hath told me, that it would not be long before we might expect good times, for the Duke of *York* having declared himself to be a *Roman Catholick*, had given a good assurance to the Pope; besides he was a Prince of that resolution and worth, that if ever he made any ingagment, he would never revoke it, particularly in so high a Concern as this, where his Soul lies at stake. So that never more hopes than now of dispersing the dark Clouds of Heresie. He hath not only ingaged himself solemnly to us for the Establishing of Religion, but that he would restore us to all our Church Lands, and other Priviledges taken from the Church formerly. And this I had not from Mr. *Evers* alone, but from several private Gentlemen, besides Priests. For my great intimacy with Mr. *Evers* did get me great acquaintance with most of the Gentry of our Religion. So by that means I came with several of them to their private meetings, where it had been debated, what the Duke of *York*'s pleasure was, that as he had given them an assurance of his part, they should not be negligent to do theirs. And that they should be in all readiness with all necessaries when the King should dye, to assist the Duke against the Protestants For they must expect some opposition from the Protestant Party: but good care before hand might prevent a great deal of michief, and that it was thought fit that every Land-lord amongst his Tenants and Servants, have some twenty, some thirty, some fourty Catholicks, and the Priests to instruct them, that they should be ready at an hours warning, and this was the course resolved upon. And that the said *Evers* told me, that there had

been great care taken for an honeſt Gentleman to be confeſſor to the Duke of *York*, and they had found one a friend to the ſaid *Evers* who was a worthy honeſt Gentleman, one Mr. *Mountford*, otherwiſe called *Bedingfield*. He was preſented to the Duke ſometimes before the *Dutch* Wars, and was with the Duke, being his Ghoſtly Father, in the *Dutch* Wars on Shipboard. Mr. *Evers* hath ſhewed me Letters from him Dated from on Shipboard, commending the Duke, how good & zealous he was in the *Roman Catholick* Religion: he thought him to be the hopefulleſt and zealouſeſt Prince in the whole Univerſe. *I* ſaw in one of thoſe Letters from on Shipboard to Mr. *Evers*, that he the ſaid *Beddingfield* had given the Duke the bleſſed Hoſt twice, in order for the Engaging himſelf with the Enemy. That in the year 1677. Mr. *Evers* and I being in diſcourſe, *Mr. Evers* told me, There were great fears and jealouſies, that the King would outlive the Duke of *York*, and then all our hopes were at an end. But to prevent that, he told me, that Cardinal *Howard* had ſent a Letter, that they had excomunicated the King as an Heretick, that he was depoſed from being King, and that any One that Killed him might merit by it. That he maintained a Damnable Heretical Doctrine; and ſo conſequently was an Enemy of Chriſt. At this time I had all the Letters directed to me for the carrying on this *Plot*, which were for Mr. *Evers*, ſome of which I opened and read, which all tended to lay hold of this opportunity; for if they miſſed this Point, they muſt never look to have the like again for the Eſtabliſhing of their Religion. And about the month of *July* or *Auguſt* 1677. ſoon after I was by Mr. *Evers* admitted into the ſecret of the Deſign for the Romiſh Government, there came one *Carrington* to *Tixall*, whom the Jeſuits thereabouts imployed as a Meſſenger of Truſt in their Buſineſs. He brought a Letter to Mr. *Evers* from Mr. *Vavaſor*, who was then at *Wolverhampton* or *Boſcobell* and meeting me in the Hall, deſired me to give it to Mr. *Evers* which I preſently did. The Letter from *Mr. Vavaſor* did incloſe in it ſeveral others, as one from *John Grove* in *London*, who in a part of the ſheet of *Paper* writ ſome News in ſhort; but underneath his ſigning Mr. *William Harcourt* began a long account, how he lately had received the two encloſed Letters, one of them from St. *Omers*, which was ſigned by *Monfort*, *Warner*, and *Peters*, as I remember, and four more whoſe names I remember not at all. And this Letter did refer to another Letter from *Paris*, to the three parties firſt named, and the ſame was ſigned from *Paris* by two names, whereof I think *Clifford* was one. This Letter did contain the opinion and advice of thoſe at *Paris*, upon a Letter which it ſeems had been firſt writ from *England* to St. *Omers*, and from St. *Omers*, tranſmitted to them.

The ſcope of which advice was this that by all means care ſhould be tak-

en not to let any Arms appear, or any appear in Arms till after the death of the *King*, becauſe they had fully conſidered, that when any ſudden *D*eath ſhould befall the King, it might be eaſily laid to the Presbyterians, who had killed the late *King*, and were ſtill Enemies to the *King* and Government Therefore they adviſed, that all ways ſhould be taken to give out and poſſeſs the People beforehand, that the presbyterians were the only Enemies, ſo that when the *King* ſhould be killed, thoſe of the Church of *England* would preſently be incenſed, and take up Arms to Revenge it, and rather crave the Aid of the Catholicks, than be afraid of them: And therefore it was fit they ſhould be in a Readineſs to make the firſt *A*larm, and give out, that all was done by the Presbyterians, and then by a little *A*ſſiſtance from abroad the Work would eaſily be compaſſed. This was the ſubſtance of the Letter from *Paris*: and they did further deſire to have the ſame ſent into *England*, with the Opinion of thoſe of St. *Omers* upon it; and thoſe of St, *Omers* did in their Letter much praiſe the Advice from *Paris*, adding nothing elſe of their own unto it, beſides Commendation, but paſſed unto other of ſmaller concerns, as that one Mr, *Evers* ſhould call to one *Gerard* of *Lancaſhire*, and *Gerald* of *Hilderſon* for fifty pound due for teaching of their Children or Relations there, and ſuch like things.

Maſter *Hartcourt* further added, that this Letter from Saint *Omers* being directed unto him, he had *C*ommunicated it, as alſo that from *Paris*, unto Maſter *Beddingfield*, and *M*aſter *Ireland*, and likewiſe to the Lord *Arundell*, Lord *Bellaſis*, Lord *Stafford*, and ſix or ſeven more whom *I* have forgot, by all whom it was highly commended as good Advice, and that all ſhould endeavour upon any Differences in Parliament, or any other Diſorders, ſtill to give out That it was thoſe Blood-ſucking, King-killing Preſbyterians, that were the Authors of it.

That *M*aſter *Evers* did ſhew them the ſaid three Letters ſent from *M*aſter, *Harcourt*, and then ſoon after, the ſame day, ſent them by the ſame Meſſenger *Carrington*, under a cover to Miſtreſs *Heveningham* at *Aſton*, to be ſhewn to her Husband, & to Sir *James Symonds* their Son-in-law, & to come back that night with the ſame Letters, as he did, for that I did ſee *Evers* ſhew them to the preſent Lord *Aſton* in the Parlour after Supper, his Lordſhip having been abroad before, and he believes them to be the ſame Letters he had ſeen in the Morning: for the *Meſſenger* was then come back, and two of the Letters lay by on the Table, and the third they were reading by the fire. And I verily believe they were the ſame Hands, and the ſame Letters. The Meſſenger was there detained all night, and made Much of in Order; and in the morning Mr. *Evers* ſent him [illegible] to Mr. *Vavaſor*, but Mr. *Evers* kept ſtill the Letters. And I did afterwards hear Mr. *Evers* and Mr. *Gerard* [illegible]

the said Letters, and in Commendation of the said Advices: and they named several Friends in their discourse that were engaged at *Paris*, whom I remember not. And Mr, *Evers* did tell me, that the Letters from *St. Omers* were brought by a particular Gentleman into *England*, and from *London* to Mr. *Vavasor* by some Friend, which I do the rather believe, for that I took notice, there was no Post-mark upon the said Letter to Mr. *Vavasor*.

That about *February* 1677 there came a Letter to *Mr. Evers*, to acquaint him, from a Friend of his in *Paris*, that he had received a Letter from *Rome*, which did require the said *Mr. Evers*, together with the said *Cotton*'s Company in *London*, with *Mr. Gavans*, *Mr. Peters*, and *Mr. Vavasor*; and accordingly *Mr. Evers* did come to *London*, and *Mr. Peters*, but whether the other two were there I know not. And when *Mr. Evers* came home, he told me, *Mr. Ireland* and *Mr. Symonds* would be in the Country the latter end of *June*, for considering the best way and means for carrying on the great Work, as it was called. And in *July* 1678. I received a Letter from *Mr. Evers*, which came from Sir *John Warners*, to acquaint him that all the Arms were ready that were bespoke, and wanted now nothing but their Orders how they should be disposed of.

In *August* following a meeting was appointed at the Lord *Aston*'s House at *Tixall*, where was present the Lord *Aston* himself, and my Lord *Stafford* Sir *James Symonds*, *Mr. Dracott*, *Mr. Heveningham*, *Mr. Symonds*, Mr. *Ireland*, *Mr. Vavasor*, *Mr. Gavan*, *Mr. Peter*, *Mr. Fitter*, *Mr. Fitzherbert*, and *Mr. Manley*, with several others; which meeting was for carrying on the Plot, the death of the King, with several other things relating thereto. At that time it was agreed, that the said Lord *Aston* and Sir *James Symonds* should go beyond the Seas in the beginning of *October*, to dispose of the Arms that were provided, but the Plot breaking out, their journey was stopt.

In *September* following my Lord *Stafford* sent for me several times into his lodging Chamber at *Tixall* where we had several private Conferences, amongst which he to'd me, That *Mr. Evers* had commended me to him, that I was true and trusty to any thing that I undertook, and that now was the time: That they stood in need of such Men as *I* was: And that if I would I might make my self happy; And if I would be one that would undertake to Kill the KING, he would give me 500 *l.* for a present supply; which I faithfully promised I would do: And he told me I should go up to *London* with him in *October*, and sometimes I should be at *Standon*, and sometimes in *London*; And should receive instructions from Mr. *Harcourt*, Mr. *Ireland*, and himself. And going to Mr. *Evers* and acquainting him of it, he told me he knew of it before. I must renew my Oath of Secrecy, which I did do. And the fourteenth of *October* I received a Letter from Mr: *Harcourt* for Mr: *Evers*; the contents of which was, This night Sir *Edmondbury Godfrey*

Godfrey is diſpatcht. Sir, ſaid I to Mr: *Evers*, do you think that this will not deſtroy all our Deſigns? Sir ſaid I, if it do not deſtroy it I will be hang'd Not ſo, ſaid *Evers*, be not ſo paſſionate, not ſo, for he was a man that did uſe to puniſh Lewd and Debaucht people; And it will rather be caſt on them, than any of us.

Another time I being in company with Mr. *Evers*, I preſſed of him, to know the reaſon why they ſhould Kill Sir *Edmundbury Godfrey*? He told me, That the Duke of *York* had ſent a Meſſage to *Coleman*, after he was taken, that he ſhould not Confeſs any thing: He returned the Duke an anſwer back, That it had been his misfortune, to declare all that he knew of the Matter to Sir *Edmondbury Godfrey*; and he heard the ſaid Sir *Edmondbury Godfrey* would come in a witneſs againſt him, in regard he had been ſo diligent in taking Examinations: The Duke returned him Anſwer back again, That bid him be ſure he did not Confeſs, and he ſhould not need to fear Sir *Edmondbury Godfrey*, and that there ſhould be care taken, or to that purpoſe. I ſaw a Letter from Mr. *Whitebread*, directed to Mr. *Evers*, but inclofed in *Groves* Letter to my ſelf, wherein was, that there was great hopes now, that things will go on well, if there be diligent care taken in the Management of it, which can never be, if it be communicated to every idle fellow. Therefore be ſure you do not truſt any but whom you have made tryal of: for if it ſhould be diſcovered, we both ruine our Deſign, and all concerned in it. For thoſe perſons which are for the People, no matter whether Gentlemen or not, ſo they be cunning, deſperate and truſty, which choice made here I fear not: for there hath been eſpecial care taken that no opportunity might be loſt; and what perſons you think fit, let me have your Anſwer next Week. Send to *Boſcobel*, and there will be a Meſſenger to bring them to me. I need not ſay much more to you, in regard you are fully acquainted with the buſineſs, and how it is to be carried on by Mr. *Ireland*. I hope you put the Gentlemen in mind, for the getting what Mony you can: Pray ſend me word by the next, how my Lady is. I think to be at St. *Omers* next week.

Thoſe Gentlemen that Subſcribed for carrying on this deſign about us in *Staffordſhire*, were as followeth, (*viz.*)

Sir *James Symonds* ſubſcribed	1000
Mr. *Heveningham*	2000
Mr. *Dracot*	3000
Mr. *Gerrard*	500
Mr. Howard.	2000

And as Maſter *Evers* told me, my Lord *Aſton* paid one thouſand pound for cartying on this deſign to Mr. *Bedingfield*: and that what was paid was returned towards the diſcharging the Accounts of Arms, which were pro-

vided beyond the Seas, and every of the aforesaid Gentlemen was to have a share, and Offices appointed. But in all our meetings it was never agreed, what their parts should be, and the Noted'st Gentlemen of all those was ever Sir *James Symonds*, being as they said, a very active person, and one that would be found a well qualified person. But as far as I ever understood, their places were to be appointed here in *London*, by some of those Great Ones whom I have formerly mentioned; but there are several persons names, besides those I have named, in that same List; and there are other persons that entred their Names beyond Seas, for this Note was only for Mr. *Evers* private use. And to that end Mr. *Evers* and Mr. *Cotton* were sent to Saint *Omers* about two or three years ago, for the sake of other Persons which were very fearfull, and some others paid their money to Mr. *Bedingfeld*, Mr. *Ireland*, Mr. *Harcourt*: And Mr. *Evers* hath been appointed to receive Acquittances for them; which Acquittances I have seen come in Mr. *Evers* Letters, one to Sir *James Symonds* at one time was for three hundred pound, which was noted in the Acquittance for a Charitable Use, but it was for the carrying on of this Wicked Design, or Mr. *Evers* told me not true. Most of the persons about *Woolverhampton*, Mr. *Gavan* took care to receive of, and discharge them. I asked Mr. *Peter* how the rest must be had, for these Gentlemen when they were all together, would be but a few. He Answered me, I need not fear, there was care taken for that, and such a care that at one hours warning they would be ready. But as he said, they had formerly told, that none, except the Gentlemen, were so much as to tell one another, till the very time, of which I never enquired after that time but I perceived that a great Number were knowing, by their fear when I was taken.

Stephen Dugdale.

FINIS.

D 2476,2 c-Mus